and the innovations made do not arouse much admiration. Under Ch'ien Lung great ingenuity was exercised in imitating in porcelain natural objects, and in curious designs, including semi-transparent ones, made by deep incisions filled with glaze, but this was an indication of luxurious decadence rather than of vigor. Before Chlen Lung's reign was half over, decline was well on the way. In addition to the Ching-te Chen potteries, many private ones were maintained, but with rare exceptions their products were inferior to those of the government works.

CULTURE UNDER THE GREAT CH?ING EMPERORS I LITERATURE

As we have seen, the literary output under the Ch'ing was enormous. Vast collections and works of reference were issued by imperial command. While, in the very nature of the case, even at their best these were the product of diligence and scholarly competence rather than of genius, they are not to be despised and are evidence of the high regard in which learning was held. The civil service examinations were firmly maintained as the chief road to official preferment and social distinction, and not only did they give prestige to scholarship, but the exacting preparation for them continued to recruit a numerous educated class which appreciated good literature.

A government can never call forth literary genius at will and most of the writing done under the Chlng was of mediocre or inferior quality. The output of the printers was voluminous, but much of it was paid for out of government funds by officials who in this way sought prestige. However, some of the literature produced was so distinctive that it is clear that originality was still

to be found among the Chinese. Excellent poetry was composed. Novels continued to appear, among them what are probably the greatest and most original ever written in China. The best known and most popular of them all, the *Hung Lou Meng,* usually translated as "The Dream of the Red Chamber," was the work of Ts'ao Hsiieh-ch'in (or Ts'ao Chan). In it the author seems to have described his own family environment, but to have left his book, incomplete, to be finished by other hands. Another novel, probably dating from about 1825, under the guise of travels in imaginary countries advocated far-reaching social reforms in the position of women—espousing the education of girls and denouncing